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# NT/ST754 James and 1 Peter: New Testament Exegesis and Constructive Theology

—FinalVersion—

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Mondays, 5:30 – 8:15 pm  
Fall 2003

## Description

What is the relationship between biblical exegesis, on the one hand, and the disciplines of theology and ethics on the other? This seminar will employ these two New Testament letters, James and 1 Peter, as case studies in the relationships among these theological disciplines.

Prerequisites: NT500 or 501, NT520, and either ST501 or CS601.

## Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, participants should be able:

- \$ To differentiate between the tasks of exegesis and “doing theology”;
- \$ To discuss knowledgeably important exegetical issues in the study of James and 1 Peter, the substance of these letters, and the potential contribution of each to the theological enterprise; and
- \$ To evaluate the relative success of attempts to deploy and/or engage the Scriptures in theological discourse.

## Course Requirements and Reading

*On questions of style, especially with regard to paper organization and references, see either Patrick H. Alexander, et al., eds., The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1999); or Carole Slade, Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses (11th ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).*

*Written materials must be submitted on time. Late work will receive no written comments. For assignments that are more than one week tardy, the grade will be penalized.*

**(1) Class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation:** Participants should prepare for each class session by (1) carefully reading the assigned texts in James or 1 Peter (see the reading schedule, below), (2) taking notes on the assigned New Testament text, and (3) comparing their observations with those in at least one of the following commentaries. Note that assigned reading should be completed by the day listed. Attendance at and readiness to participate in all sessions of the Seminar is expected. Persons who attend all sessions of the seminar will have 2 points added to their final grade. Discussion questions will be posted to a Conference Folder on the Intranet ("NT(ST)754 – JBG") in advance of most sessions to guide student preparation. Persons who participate frequently and substantively in the Seminar discussion, demonstrating their reflective interaction with course reading and posted questions, will have as many as 2 points added to their final grade.

**For James**

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Letter of James*. AB 37A. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Wall, Robert W. *The Community of the Wise: The Book of James*. The New Testament in Context. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity, 1997.

**For 1 Peter**

Achtemeier, Paul J. *A Commentary on First Peter*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

Elliott, John H. *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 37B. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

**(2) Critical Reviews:** Each student should complete two book reviews, one from each of the two sections below, during the course of the semester. Each review should be approximately 1250-1500 words (5-6 pages) in length, typed, double-spaced.

**Section One: James and 1 Peter (15%)**

***James (Due Date: 6 October 2003)***

Baukham, Richard. *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*. New Testament Readings. London: Routledge, 1999.

Hartin, Patrick J. *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical, 1999.

**1 Peter (Due Date: 20 October 2003)**

Martin, Troy W. *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*. SBLDS 131. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars, 1992.

Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *A Biblical Theology of Exile*. OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

**Section Two: Scripture and Theology (25%)**

***Due Date: 21 November 2003***

Green, Joel B., and Max Turner, eds. *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Theological Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Watson, Francis Text, *Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1994.

For information regarding my expectations of book reviews see the Course Materials.

**(3) Interpretive Assignment:** For at least two class sessions, one on James and one on 1 Peter, prepare in advance and submit at the beginning of class an interpretive assignment for the assigned text (see “Interpretive Assignment” on the course schedule, below). These papers should be single-spaced, typed, no more than two pages (i.e., about 900 words, with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one-inch margins) in length. These are not designed to be research papers, application papers, or homilies, and no secondary materials should be consulted in their preparation. They should evidence a close reading of the text on its own terms, with attention to the usual literary, sociohistorical, and theological concerns. For information regarding my expectations of “interpretive assignments” see the Course Materials. (20%)

**(4) A Research Assignment:** An essay of approximately 2500-3000 words (10-12 pages), typed, double-spaced, with appropriate notes and bibliography, treating a selected theological/ethical motif within either James or 1 Peter. This paper should evidence a close reading of the text, critical engagement with the range of secondary resources appropriate to the study, and constructive work in theology and/or ethics. For information regarding my expectations of research papers, see the Course Materials. Due by 4:00 pm, 12 December 2003. (40%)

*For bibliographic resources, be sure to consult New Testament Abstracts in the Library. See also Anthony Casarella, Bibliography of Literature on First Peter, New Testament Tools and Studies 23 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).*

## Course Schedule

8 Sept	1. Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, and Ethics: The Problematic Reading James: Some Assumptions
15 Sept	2. Reading James (1:1–2:26) Interpretive Assignment: 1:13–21
22 Sept	3. Reading James (3:1–4:12) Interpretive Assignment: 3:13–18
29 Sept	4. Reading James (4:13–5:20) Interpretive Assignment: 5:13–18
6 Oct	5. Theological Sources/Norms and Theological Vision in James James, Faith, and Wealth: Theology as Cultural Critique <b>Due: Review for Section One Books (James)</b>
13 Oct	6. Anthropology, Eschatology, and Speech in James: Performing James
20 Oct	7. Scripture and Theology: Further Reflections on the Craft (with reference to Reading 1 Peter) <b>Due: Review for Section One Books (1 Peter)</b>
27 Oct	8. Reading 1 Peter: Some Assumptions Reading 1 Peter (1:1–2:10) Interpretive Assignment: 1:3–12
3 Nov	9. Reading 1 Peter (2:11–3:12) Interpretive Assignment: 3:1–7
10 Nov	10. Reading 1 Peter (3:13–4:11) Interpretive Assignment: 4:1–6
17 Nov	11. Reading 1 Peter (4:12–5:14) Interpretive Assignment: 5:1–5
21 Nov	<b>Due: Review for Section Two Books</b>
24 Nov	No Class
1 Dec	12. 1 Peter and “Canonical Conversations” Theological Sources/Norms and Theological Vision in 1 Peter
8 Dec	13. Pneumatology, Christology, and Soteriology for an Exilic People of God
12 Dec	<b>Due: Research Assignment</b>

## Encouraged Reading

Chester, Andrew, and Ralph P. Martin. *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*.  
New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Cosgrove, Charles H. *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules*.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2002.

- Fowl, Stephen E. and L. Gregory Jones. *Reading in Communion: Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Hafemann, Scott J., ed. *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Scobie, Charles H.H. *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *First Theology: God, Scripture, and Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Watson, Francis. *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1997.